

Keeping the Gains

MAINTAINING PROGRESS · NOTICING EARLY SIGNS · GETTING BACK ON TRACK

What's helping, warning signs, and how to get back on track

Progress rarely moves in a straight line. Ups and downs are a normal part of change, and a difficult week does not undo what you have learned. Making a plan while things are going well can make it easier to notice early changes and respond sooner.

Setbacks are common

Many people have ups and downs after making progress. A lapse is a moment, not a verdict.

Early is easier

Changes are often simpler to respond to when you notice them sooner rather than later.

Skills stay with you

What helped before can often help again, especially when it is practised regularly.

01 What's been helping

Worth remembering on harder days

What I understand now that I didn't before

Changes I'm proud of

Things that help me – tick any that apply

☐ Noticing unhelpful thoughts ☐ Regular sleep & routine ☐ Movement

☐ Staying connected ☐ Meaningful activities ☐ Facing, not avoiding

☐ Grounding or breathing ☐ Self-compassion ☐ Setting boundaries

☐ Problem-solving ☐ Other

I'll keep these going by...

02 Noticing the signs

Thoughts, feelings, body and behaviour

HOW I'M DOING	WHAT I MIGHT NOTICE	WHAT I'LL DO
STEADY I'm doing well		
EARLY SIGNS Something is shifting		
STRUGGLING I need more support		

03 Harder moments ahead

Planning for what might test me

Situations, dates or stresses that may be harder

How I'll prepare or respond

04 Getting back on track

If things slip, and who can help

If I have a setback

- 1 **Pause and name it.** "This is a setback, not a failure."
- 2 **Look at what changed:** stress, sleep, routine or events.
- 3 **Return to one skill** that helped before, and start small.
- 4 **Reach out** to someone I trust, or book a check-in.
- 5 **Learn from it:** what might help next time?

Something kind I can say to myself

My support

PEOPLE I CAN REACH OUT TO

HOW TO CONTACT THEM

My psychologist / GP

Checking in with my plan

I'll look at this again on
and then every

Today I feel steady

0 = not at all · 10 = very steady

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0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What the research suggests: in depression, skills learned in CBT appear to have lasting protective effects, and continued support may further reduce relapse risk (Bockting et al., 2015). Relapse-prevention research suggests a brief lapse need not become a full return of difficulties, and that how we respond to it can matter (Witkiewitz & Marlatt, 2004). This plan is a reflective tool, not a guarantee.

SOURCES

Bockting, C. L., Hollon, S. D., Jarrett, R. B., Kuyken, W., & Dobson, K. (2015). A lifetime approach to major depressive disorder: The contributions of psychological interventions in preventing relapse and recurrence. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 41, 16–26.

Witkiewitz, K., & Marlatt, G. A. (2004). Relapse prevention for alcohol and drug problems: That was Zen, this is Tao. *American Psychologist*, 59(4), 224–235.